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Sali Says Democrats Iraq Proposal “Fails Test of Leadership”

Congressman Sponsors Iraq War Legislation Supporting “Benchmarks” And President’s Reinforcement Plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congress should support President Bush’s efforts to reinforce American troops in Iraq and sustain his authority as Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Rep. Bill Sali said today.

“The Democratic plan renders the military authority of the Commander in Chief null and void,” said Sali. “It offers our terrorist enemies a target date for renewed, widespread regional violence that would undermine the fledgling democracy in Baghdad. It is a fundamental failure of the test of the leadership the Democrats say they are ready to assert.

“But even more destructively, it would say to our troops that they will be used as political pawns and moved around the map for partisan advantage. And it would set the stage for the collapse of hope in the Middle East – hope for stability, for the spread of peaceful self-government and respect for essential human rights and for our ability to resist terrorism without compromise.

“Thankfully, cooler heads than Nancy Pelosi’s have prevailed in the Democratic conference, and the shocking proposal to demand that the President obtain congressional approval for any attack against Iran has been stricken from the larger Democratic plan. Perhaps this will give the Democrats further pause before they dangerously constrict our President, our troops and our chance for victory in Iraq,” said Sali.

Sali noted that early news reports indicate that the President’s plan to improve security in Iraq is beginning to work and there is hope for stability in Iraq and for its new government.

“No one is saying that we’re out of the woods yet, but indications are that the President’s plan to curb violence in Iraq is beginning to succeed. To ensure that the President’s proposal is working, we need performance standards that will help us measure our success in Iraq objectively and effectively. I’ve signed onto three pieces of legislation that will better equip our troops, the Congress and the President to work together to achieve what we all want, which is victory over America’s terrorist enemies in tandem with a secure, free government in Iraq,” said Sali.

Sali has cosponsored the following measures:

- H.R. 1062: Authored by Republican Leader U.S. Rep. John Boehner (R-OH). As described in material provided by Rep. Boehner’s office, “It is in America’s strategic interests to ensure regional stability in the Middle East and to deny terrorists a safe haven in Iraq. To achieve these objectives, House Republican Leaders and key Committee Ranking Members have identified a set of strategic benchmarks designed to measure the progress of President Bush’s new strategy in Iraq, and to hold the Bush Administration and the Iraqi government accountable for their role in achieving success. These benchmarks are aggressive and tailored to every component of the President’s new strategy. The President and the Iraqi government must certify progress is being made to meet these benchmarks and report to Congress every 30 days. These strategic benchmarks provide a common sense yardstick by which to measure whether sufficient progress is being made in Iraq.” H.R. 1062 also establishes a select bipartisan congressional committee to monitor progress in Iraq.
- H.R. 511: Authored by U.S. Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX), the longest-held POW of the Vietnam War, this measure says that “Congress will not cut off or restrict funding for units and members of the Armed Forces that the Commander in Chief has deployed in harm’s way in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.”
- H.Res.147: Authored by U.S. Rep. Steve King (R-IA), this bill would “reaffirm the authority of President Bush as Commander in Chief and lend the encouragement and support of the House to the military commanders and soldiers on the ground in Iraq who have devised and will carry out this new strategy.” The King proposal “supports the President’s new strategy in Iraq and expresses the commitment of this body to victory in Iraq and the Global War on Terror (and) highlights the importance of success in this historic fight for the safety and security of the American people and the preservation of the American way of life.”